

# LAIKA PRESS

## Drypoint Manual

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*laikapress.org*

Drypoint is the process in which the lines of the image you want to create are incised into a copper plate. Today, we will do this with a variety of sharp tools: diamond tip pens, halftone rake sandpaper, mezzotint rockers, roulettes, and engraving burins. The process of incising for drypoint creates a slightly raised ragged rough edge to the lines, known as the burr. When ink that has been applied to the plate is wiped off both the incised line, and specifically the burr, receives ink when the plate is wiped, giving the printed line a distinctive velvety look. Owing to the delicate nature of the burr, drypoint is usually made in small editions, stopping before the burr is crushed by the pressure of the intaglio press.

### SUPPLIES

copper or plexiglass plate	Sculpey clay	newsprint
metal file	burnisher	tracing paper
Putz pomade	fine steel wool	etching tools
paper	intaglio ink	tarletan
chit/bondo scraper/credit card	rags	

### PLATE PREPARATION

- Bevel the edges of your copper plate or plexiglass with a metal file.
- Polish copper plate if desired.
  - Apply Putz pomade with a piece of fine steel wool.
  - Rub in circles in multiple directions until the plate is polished.
  - Wipe off excess with a rag.
- Transfer desired image onto the plate.
  - Draw directly onto the plate using sharpie, or
  - Transfer the image using sculpey and a burnisher.
    - Draw image in graphite on a piece of tracing paper.
    - Roll sculpey clay across your plate until there is a thin transparent oily residue.
    - Place image graphite down and tape secure.
    - Use a burnisher to transfer the graphite from your tracing paper to the plate.

### INCISING THE PLATE

- Diamond Tip Pen
  - Apply pressure and draw just like with a pencil.

- Creates thin smooth lines.
  - This is your go-to tool!
- Mezzotint Rocker
  - For copper plate only.
  - Place rocker at a 15% angle with a firm grip on the handle and your elbow on the table.
  - Rock back and forth, slowly inching forward.
  - Be sure to rock the rocker in multiple angles.
  - Great for making sections of dark tonality.
- Halftone Rake
  - This tool works like the diamond tip pen except it created a series of parallel lines, 10 on one side and 15 on the other.
  - Great for creating cross hatching effects.
- Roulettes
  - Simply roll the edge of the tool across your plate.
  - Creates a series of dots or small lines.
- Engraving Burin
  - Place on table and pick up with all your fingers on the sides or top of the tool.
  - Place strongly into the plate.
  - Rotate your plate and not the burin to curve lines.
  - Be careful to hold the plate with your palm up and only fingers touching the plate.

## HOW TO PRINT

- Soak paper
  - Paper must soak for at least 30 minutes!
  - BFK and German Etching are trusted paper brands.
  - Asian papers such as Mulberry and Kitakata also work great.
- Start with a clean plate! (Or a just printed plate.)
- Apply ink with a chit, bondo scraper, or old credit card.
- Use tarlatan to push ink into the incised lines.
- Use tarlatan to remove excess ink and wipe ink away from the smooth area of the plate.
- Use a piece of newsprint gently with fingers to remove ink from the “white” areas of the plate.
- Blot your paper.
- Press order from bottom to top:
  - Press Bed
  - Registration Guide or newsprint
  - Your plate
  - Paper you want to print on
  - Newsprint

- Blankets (catcher, cushion, pusher)
- Run through the press.

## HOW TO CLEAN UP

Intaglio inks are oil based, so they must be cleaned this way!

- Use the vegetable oil to get ink off the glass and tools!
  - Use a toothbrush when cleaning your plate!
- Wipe up with a rag.
- Use simple green to degrease all surfaces.